

# Interaction

Dear Editors:

I must respond to the reply by Brian Aldiss (IZ 68) to the letters that you received on “Horse Meat.” My reaction to the story had been that I did not like it, and wished I had not read it, but that perhaps others wanted that kind of thing. Now we are told that it had a deeper purpose. This seems to amount to an attempt to teach us about the world we live in, and to demonstrate that if people are treated like animals they behave like animals. If this is the intended message then the story needed a covering explanation – it did not come over. Nor is the behaviour described at all like that of animals – the story in fact contains good descriptions of extreme examples of regrettable types of human behaviour.

Brian Aldiss says that those who are unhappy with the theme should join Amnesty International. I am, as it happens, already a member and so, presumably, did not need to read the story. It is a pity that this was not explained in a prominent note after the title.

The most recent issue of the Amnesty International journal (for January/February 1993) mentions in its International News alleged atrocities in Iraq, Cuba, Tashkent, Malawi and Sudan. Other issues deal usually with other places, and very many countries feature in the course of a year. Descriptions of atrocities are given occasionally, and are covered in more detail in special reports, but not in the highly distasteful manner of “Horse Meat.” Nor is it true that the atrocities described are far worse than those described by Brian Aldiss. Can anyone imagine atrocities that are far worse. If “Slasher Wilkins,” one of those who wrote to you, does take Brian Aldiss’s advice and join Amnesty International, he is likely to be disappointed.

If you actually want to further the work of Amnesty International, you might do better to publicize this directly, and feature extracts from its reports. This would also be a better way of teaching readers about the world we live in. Or perhaps you should continue to try to entertain us, perhaps with a more discriminating approach to stories submitted by eminent authors, and let us go elsewhere for atrocity reports.

**Laurie Jones**  
Beckenham, Kent

Dear Editors:

You ask for comments about those stories that stood out over recent issues. I have to nominate Brian Aldiss’ story “Horse Meat” (IZ 65) as

being one that stands out vividly. Vividly – as in opening the fridge and finding maggots crawling over the meat, or like finding a turd in the bath. I might have expected this from some slash-and-gore publication; I expected better from *Interzone*, and from Brian Aldiss. It leaves a bad taste. A very bad taste.

Aldiss defends this piece of gratuitous nastiness with appeals to the state of Eastern Europe, Rumania and other oppressive regimes. I am entirely unconvinced; he should go back and read Geoff Ryman’s *The Undiscovered Country*, Ian McDonald’s *Hearts, Hands and Voices* or even Dan Simmons’ *Children of the Night* to see how an author can stir moral outrage at such atrocities without wallowing in them.

“Horse Meat” is a bleak nihilistic exercise in which no character has any redeeming features worth bothering with, and as such is hardly likely to engender sympathy and contributions for Amnesty International (are they content to have their name linked to this, or is this an *a posteriori* justification for this brutal and misogynistic piece, I wonder?).

If it is metaphor then the inescapable conclusion is that none of the people portrayed have any trace of human morality worth saving, and can all go to hell together. Moral outrage requires a victim, someone we could identify with, who might have been, in other circumstances, ourselves. There are none here. As a story, as sf, as a metaphor or moral point it fails. Completely.

And worse is the feeling that, before the hurried justification after the event by Aldiss, it is presented, by author and editor, in a science-fiction magazine, as (presumably) *entertainment!*?  
**Steve Jeffrey**  
Kidlington, Oxon.

Dear Editors:

I like the balance of the magazine and the quality and variety of the fiction you print. The illustrations enhance the printed word.

The Bob Shaw special issue was very, very good. The cover was stunning. The contents match the cover and I especially enjoyed reading Bob on writing, especially as I remember seeing his first efforts all those years ago.

I have just today received a letter from an American fanzine editor who writes “*Interzone* must be a good magazine if Buck Coulson says that, if he weren’t being paid to review prozines, he wouldn’t buy all that many but he would buy *Interzone* if he could scrape up the money for the subscrip-

tion rate.” I intend to send my correspondent some issues – he says he himself is considering subscribing so if you get a sub from him you’ll know why.

**Derek Pickles**  
Bradford

Dear Editors:

To begin specifically: I find Bob Shaw’s attitude to stories involving robots or androids unacceptable. It is obvious by the examples he gives that he is referring to “yesterdays tomorrows,” and that he has probably not read or watched any science fiction for some time. He attempts to ridicule such technology here, going on with a diatribe which is obviously based on his own, stated, aversion to complex machinery.

He tells us the design and manufacture of a man-like robot is just about “impossible.” He calls himself a science-fiction writer yet he uses that word? The final straw comes when he asks what the point would be of an android robot’s existence? I don’t think there’s much point in listing the reasons. The question to ask is; what use could the military, governments, religions, make of a machine that emulates a human being, and is not? The answers are as many as they are obvious. Other questions to ask are; what point is there to climbing Mount Everest, walking to the Pole, trying to create AI, existence? We might as well all give up and get pissed. Perhaps this is what Shaw is trying to tell us?

He also makes a mistake when he says “the vein has been mined pretty thoroughly.” If an analogy has to be drawn with veins and mining, then the truth is that we are in a different mine now. A change of location which left Shaw behind.

Now, to the real reason for this letter: normally I would not complain, as until just recently I have found *Interzone* commendable, but this is the second time I have been profoundly pissed off by its contents, the last time when you published that piece of sick crap by Aldiss, which had obviously just been rejected by *Spanking Monthly* or some such. *Do you think the name of the author is more important than the story?*

Recently I wrote a letter to BBR bemoaning the fact that IZ always seems to get a lot of shit slung at it. It was published and no doubt I’m in for a spattering now. It does not please me that this shit-slinging may come to be justified.

**Neil Asher**  
Mundon, Essex

*David Pringle* replies: *Neal Asher is complaining about two very different things. Anyone may disagree with Bob Shaw’s opinions on robots – but those*

Hungarian [and German] vein of horror-fantasy was very influential in the shaping of the horror-film tradition, even in Hollywood.) 7th January 1993.

Moorcock, Michael. **The Shores of Death.** Penguin/Roc, ISBN 0-14-017352-8, 156pp, paperback, £4.50. (Sf novel, first published as *The Twilight Man* in 1966; it was originally serialized as “The Shores of Death” in *New Worlds* in 1964, and for some reason it has reverted to that title, though Moorcock’s introduction still refers to the book as *The Twilight Man*.) 7th January 1993.

Niven, Larry, and Steven Barnes. **Achilles’ Choice.** Illustrated by Boris Vallejo. Pan, ISBN 0-330-32474-8, 214pp, trade paperback, £8.99. (Sf novella, first published in the USA, 1991.) 8th January 1993.

Niven, Larry, and Steven Barnes. **Dream Park: The Voodoo Game.** Pan, ISBN 0-330-32647-3, 346pp, paperback, £4.99. (Sf novel, first published in the USA, 1991; sequel to *Dream Park: The Barsoom Project*.) 8th January 1993.

Park, Paul. **The Cult of Loving Kindness.** Grafton, ISBN 0-586-21261-2, 312pp, paperback, £4.99. (Sf novel, first published in the USA, 1992; third in the “Starbridge Chronicles” trilogy.) 11th January 1993.

Saberhagen, Fred, and James V. Hart. **Bram Stoker’s Dracula.** Afterword by Francis Ford Coppola. Pan, ISBN 0-330-32857-3, 301pp, paperback, £4.99. (Horror novelization, first published in the USA, 1992; based on the screenplay by James V. Hart, “from the original novel by Bram Stoker”; illustrated with colour photographs.) 4th December 1992.

Saul, John. **Comes the Blind Fury.** Hodder/NEL, ISBN 0-450-58170-5, 318pp, paperback, £4.99. (Horror novel, first published in the USA, 1980.) December 1992.

Saul, John. **Cry for the Strangers.** Hodder/NEL, ISBN 0-450-58169-1, 320pp, paperback, £4.99. (Horror novel, first published in the USA, 1979.) December 1992.

Saul, John. **Punish the Sinners.** Hodder/NEL, ISBN 0-450-58171-3, 332pp, paperback, £4.99. (Horror novel, first published in the USA, 1978.) December 1992.

Saul, John. **Summon the Children.** Hodder/NEL, ISBN 0-450-58172-1, 315pp, paperback, £4.99. (Horror novel, first published in the USA, 1977; this was the book which first brought its prolific author to fame as a horror merchant.) December 1992.

Saul, John. **When the Wind Blows.** Hodder/NEL, ISBN 0-450-58168-3, 319pp, paperback, £4.99. (Horror novel, first published in the USA, 1981.) December 1992.

Silverberg, Robert. **The Face of the Waters.** Grafton, ISBN 0-586-21106-3, 428pp, paperback, £4.99. (Sf novel, first published in 1991; reviewed by John Clute in *Interzone* 51.) 3rd December 1992.

Smith, Wilbur. **River God.** Macmillan, ISBN 0-333-56874-5, 535pp, hardcover, £15.99. (Historical fantasy novel, first edition; proof copy received; Smith, bestselling South African writer of adventure stories, previously wrote a timeslip romance called *The Sunbird* [1972]; set in ancient Egypt, this new book appears to be his first return to that “Haggardian” mode in over 20 years.) 26th March 1993.

Steele, Allen. **Labyrinth of Night.** Arrow/Legend, ISBN 0-09-919931-9, 353pp, paperback, £4.99. (Sf novel, first published in the USA, 1992; apparently, this one was published in hardcover by Century/Legend last year, but we never saw it; it’s a Mars novel, expanded from a short story which first appeared in Asimov’s in 1989.) 21st January 1993.

Steele, Allen. **Rude Astronauts.** Century/Legend, ISBN 0-09-926001-8, 261pp, trade paperback, £9.99. (Sf collection, first edition [?]; there is a simultaneous hardcover edition [not seen]; it has a 1992 copyright date inside, but we’re not sure that’s correct.) 21st January 1993.

Stoker, Bram. **Dracula.** Pan, ISBN 0-330-32856-5, 382pp, paperback, £4.99. (Horror novel, first published in 1897; it’s described on the cover as “the original classic novel” – as opposed to the unoriginal, non-classic novel [see under Saberhagen, above].) 4th December 1992.

Walton, Tony. **Executive Relief.** Janus Publishing [Duke House, 37 Duke St., London W1M 5DF], ISBN 1-85756-020-5, 268pp, hardcover, £13.95. (Horror/crime [?] novel, first edition.) 27th January 1993.

## Overseas Books Received

Aronica, Lou, Amy Stout and Betsy Mitchell, eds. **Full Spectrum 4.** Bantam, ISBN 0-553-37142-8, 485pp, trade paperback, \$12.95. (Sf/fantasy anthology, first edition; proof copy received; it contains mainly original stories by Kevin J. Anderson, Stephen R. Donaldson, Gregory Feeley, Elizabeth Hand, Nancy Kress, Ursula Le Guin, Martha Soukup and a whole slew of newer writers; David Brin’s “What Continues, What Fails” is reprinted from *Interzone*.) 16th March 1993.

Card, Orson Scott. **Cruel Miracles.** Tor, ISBN 0-812-52304-0, 242pp, paperback, \$4.99. (Sf/fantasy collection, first published in 1990; it doesn’t say so on cover or title page, but this is in fact *Maps in a Mirror, Volume 3*, i.e. a quarter of the original massive hardcover volume [which was published in Britain in two paperback volumes].) December 1992.

Chalker, Jack L. **The Birth of Flux & Anchor: Soul Rider, Book Four.** Tor, ISBN 0-812-52292-3, 374pp, paperback, \$3.99. (Sf/fantasy novel, first published in 1985.) December 1992.

Daniel, Tony. **Warpath.** Tor, ISBN 0-312-85282-7, 318pp, hardcover, \$18.95. (Sf novel, first edition; proof copy received; a debut novel which comes garlanded with praise from the likes of Bear, Dozois, Shepard and Zelazny.) April 1993.

Hargreaves, Mathew D. **Anne Inez McCaffrey: Forty Years of Publishing – An International Bibliography.** Afterword by Anne McCaffrey. Hargreaves [P.O. Box 66099, Seattle, WA 98166-0099, USA], no ISBN, 338pp, hardcover, \$35. (Author bibliography, first edition; proof copy received; although self-published and lacking an ISBN, this is a real book; copiously illustrated with photos of book jackets, it looks to be a very thorough and professional job; British and European readers should add \$3 if they wish to order by mail.) December 1992.

Ing, Dean. **Systemic Shock.** Tor, ISBN 0-812-50038-5, 313pp, paperback, \$4.99. (Sf novel, first published in 1981; it’s a near-future war tale of the “survivalist” type, and clearly it has been updated since its first appearance [references to Chernobyl, the collapse of the Soviet Union, etc] although it doesn’t say so anywhere on the book.) December 1992.

Jacobs, Harvey. **Beautiful Soup: A Novel for the 21st Century.** Celadon Press [101 West 12th St., Suite 8G, New York, NY 10011, USA], ISBN 0-9634185-0-5, 263pp, trade paperback, \$12.95. (Humorous sf novel, first edition; it’s possibly Jacobs’s first full-length sf work, though he will be known to

longtime readers of *New Worlds*, *F & SF* and other magazines for his funny tales which were collected many years ago in a volume entitled *The Egg of the Glak and Other Stories*; this is very much a “New York sf slipstream” book: Charles Platt is among the persons acknowledged by the author, and Thomas M. Disch is among the critics who commend him; another critic is quoted as saying, “Move over Philip Roth, Mel Brooks, Hieronymous Bosch, at last we’ve got another original...”.) *Late entry: 31st October publication, received in December 1992.*

Kipling, Rudyard. **Kipling’s Science Fiction.** Edited by John Brunner. Tor, ISBN 0-312-85355-6, xiv+178pp, hardcover, \$17.95. (Sf collection, first edition; it contains nine tales and a poem by Kipling, and introduction and story notes by Brunner; a companion volume on Kipling’s Fantasy has been announced; recommended.) *Late entry: October publication, received in December 1992.*

Newman, Kim. **Jago.** Carroll & Graf, ISBN 0-88184-868-9, 537pp, hardcover, \$22. (Horror novel, first published in the UK, 1991; reviewed by John Clute in *Interzone* 54.) 15th January 1993.

[Nice, University of.] **Actes du IVeme colloque international de science-fiction: “Science et science-fiction.”** 2 vols. Université de Nice: Centre d’Etude de la Métaphore [98 bd Edouard Herriot, B.P. 369, 06007 Nice Cedex, France], ISSN 0290-6635, 653pp, paperbound, no price shown. (Collection of papers on the links between science and sf, first edition; contributors include Roger Bozzetto, Jacques Goimard, Elizabeth Anne Hull, Doris Lessing, Fredrik Pohl, Norman Spinrad and Denise Terrel, among many others; the “colloque” in question took place in April 1991, and these big volumes also constitute the journal *Metaphores* issues 20, 21 and 22.) *Late entry: September 1992 publication, received in December.*

Norton, Andre, and P.M. Griffin. **Redline the Stars.** “The New Solar Queen Novel.” Tor, ISBN 0-312-85314-9, 304pp, hardcover, \$19.95. (Shared-world sf novel, first edition; proof copy received; this appears to be a novel by Griffin alone, based on an old space-opera background created by Norton many years ago.) April 1993.

Resnick, Mike. **Purgatory: A Chronicle of a Distant World.** Tor, ISBN 0-312-85275-4, 320pp, hardcover, \$19.95. (Sf novel, first edition; proof copy received; it’s described as “the second of his planned Colonial Worlds triptych”; the first was *Paradise*.) March 1993.

Shetterly, Will. **Elsewhere.** “A novel of the Borderlands – where magic meets rock & roll.” Tor, ISBN 0-812-52003-3, 238pp, paperback, \$3.99. (Shared-world fantasy novel, first published in 1991.) December 1992.

Slusser, George, and Tom Shippey, eds. **Fiction 2000: Cyberpunk and the Future of Narrative.** University of Georgia Press, ISBN 0-8203-1449-8, vi+303pp, trade paperback, \$20. (Anthology of critical essays on recent science fiction, first edition; there is a simultaneous hardcover edition [not seen]; the mainly academic contributors include Paul Alkon, Gregory Benford, Frances Bonner, John Huntington, David Porush, Eric S. Rabkin, Lewis Shiner, Gary Westfahl and others whose names may be familiar to readers of *SF Studies*, *Foundation*, etc.) *Late entry: 26th November publication, received in December 1992.*

Thomas, Sue. **Correspondence.** Overlook Press, ISBN 0-87951-480-9, 153pp, hardcover, \$19.95. (Sf novel, first published in